Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the present application.

Listing of the Claims:

1. (Original) A method, for use in a virus-free certificate cache, of caching one or multiple virus-free certificates, each virus-free certificate certifying that a file is virus-free, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving a virus-free certificate request for a file;

identifying the file in a cache table, said cache table comprising for each identified file one or a plurality of virus-free certificates;

selecting in the cache table one virus-free certificate for the identified file, using one or a plurality of anti-virus criteria;

retrieving from the cache table said selected virus-free certificate;

sending back in response to the virus-free certificate request the retrieved virus-free certificate.

2. (Original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the virus-free certificate request comprises:

a list of one or a plurality of anti-virus programs to execute on the file to determine whether the file is virus-free or not.

3. (Original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the virus-free certificate request further comprises:

an identification of the file.

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4. (Original) The method according to the claim 1 wherein the virus-free certificate request further comprises:

an identification of a virus-free certificate authority, said virus-free certificate authority having authority to generate virus-free certificates.

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the virus-free certificate comprises:

a the list of the one or plurality of anti-virus programs that have been executed on the file.

6. (Original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the virus-free certificate further comprises:

a virus-free certificate authority identification.

7. (Original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of selecting in the cache table one virus-free certificate for the identified file using one or a plurality of anti-virus criteria comprises the further steps of:

comparing the list of one or a plurality of anti-virus programs comprised in each virus-free certificate associated with the identified file in the cache table with the list of one of a plurality of anti-virus programs comprised in the received virus-free/certificate request;

and where the list of one of a plurality of anti-virus programs comprised in a virus-free certificate associated with the identified file includes the list of one or a plurality of anti-virus programs comprised in the received virus-free certificate request:

selecting said virus-free certificate.

8. (Original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of selecting in the cache table one virus-free certificate for the identified file using one or a plurality anti-virus criteria comprises the further steps of:

comparing the virus-free certificate authority identification comprised in each virus-free certificate associated with the identified file in the cache table, and the virus-free certificate authority identification comprised in the received virus-free certificate request:

and where the virus-free certificate authority identification comprised in a virus-free certificate associated with the identified file is identical to the virus-free certificate authority identification comprised in the received virus-free certificate request:

selecting said virus-free certificate.

9. (Original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of identifying the file in a cache table comprises the further steps of:

If the file is not identified in said cache table:

forwarding the received virus-free certificate request to another virus-free certificate cache;
receiving a virus-free certificate in response to said forwarded virus-free certificate request;
sending back in response to the received virus-free certificate request, said received virus-free certificate.

10. (Original) The method according to claim 1 comprising the further step of:

receiving a request to update the cache table, said request comprising a virus- free certificate;
storing said virus-free certificate in the cache table.

11. (Original) The method according to claim 10 wherein the step of receiving a request to update the cache table comprises the further step of:

forwarding said request to another virus-free certificate cache.

12. (Original) The method according to claim 1 comprising the further step of:

discarding from the cache table the virus-free certificate which are no more valid.

13. (Original) The method according to claim 1 comprising the further steps of:

selecting in the cache table one or a plurality of virus-free certificates, using an information indicating for each virus-free certificate the date of the latest virus-free certificate request which has been received for said virus-free certificate;
discarding from the cache table said one or plurality of selected virus-free certificate.

14. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1 comprising the further steps of:

selecting in the cache table one or a plurality of virus-free certificate, using an information indicating for each virus-free certificate the number of virus-free certificate request which have been received for said virus-free certificate;

discarding from the cache table said one or a plurality of selected virus-free certificate ~~Comprises~~.

15. (Original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the generated virus-free certificate comprises:

a file signature for certifying that the file is declared a virus-free by the selected virus-free certificate authority.

16. (Original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the virus-free-certificate further comprises:

a file identification;
a public key for decrypting the file signature;
a certificate signature for authenticating the virus-free certificate;
an indication of the virus-free certificate validity.

17. (Original) A system for caching one or more virus-free certificates within a LAN/WAN network, each virus-free certificate certifying that a file to be downloaded to a client is virus-free, said system comprising:

a mechanism for receiving a request for a virus-free certificate associated with a file to be downloaded to said client;

cache table device for storing one or more virus-free certificates for files, said cache table device including look-up mechanism for identifying one or more virus-free certificates associated with a requested file in a cache table; said look-

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up mechanism enabling selection of one virus-free certificate for the identified file using one or a plurality of anti-virus criteria; and,

mechanism for retrieving from a cache table said selected virus-free certificate; and, in response to said request, returning a retrieved virus-free certificate with said file.

18. (Original) A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for caching one or more virus-free certificates within a LAN/WAN network, each virus-free certificate certifying that a file to be downloaded to a client is virus-free, said method steps comprising:

    a)   receiving a virus-free certificate request for a file;

    b)   identifying the file in a cache table, said cache table comprising for each identified file one or plurality of virus-free certificates;

    c)   selecting in the cache table one virus-free certificate for the identified file using one or a plurality of anti virus criteria; and,

    d)   retrieving from the cache table said selected virus-free certificate and returning a retrieved virus-free certificate with said file.